

# ST KITTS & NEVIS RED CROSS SOCIETY



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## President's report for period 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019 to May 31<sup>st</sup> 2021

The last General Assembly was convened on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at the St. Kitts & Nevis Red Cross Society (SKNRCS) Headquarters. During this session as President, I presented an overview of the major activities of the national society for the reporting term. Unfortunately, no treasurer's report was laid before the Assembly for consideration and discussion. This was since the Treasurer did not perform her duties during the term and the office manager (Director General) who managed the finances during the period indicated that it was not her responsibility to deliver a financial overview of the National Society. Subsequently, a new executive was elected, and I was re-elected to serve as President for the next term. Over the next three to four months, the executive body opted to make some changes to the managerial positions in the society. A new Director General and Disaster Coordinator were appointed and installed to support the existing Governing Board by March 2020.

During the early months of the term, the executive was faced with several challenges from internal struggles as well as the Covid-19 virus threat. The team collectively confronted the challenges of the pandemic and worked assiduously with the support of the Cluster Support Team in Trinidad to develop plans to mitigate against the impacts of the virus to the operations of the national society as

well as our ability to provide a supportive role to the State as an auxiliary organization. Successful completion of the plans and supportive budget resulted in the national society being approved its projected activities with a reduced but significant budgetary allocation from the appeal. This meant that the team now had two major projects running concurrently to benefit of our communities and the national society as well.

The great Dalai Lama once posited that “Whenever there is a challenge, there is also an opportunity to face it, to demonstrate and develop our will and determination.” The team leading the SKNRCS adopted this concept and utilized the challenges to enhance and develop the national society’s infrastructure, the human capacity of the volunteer base; and the plans and policies to effectively operate during any disaster.

### **Infrastructural improvement**

Under the Covid-19 response project, the national society was able to fully air-conditioned the entire national headquarters and another property on the compound. This was done to make the conference facility more comfortable and thus attracting more rental opportunities for the NS. As the compound is conveniently located but was uncomfortable during hot days, it was necessary to invest in air conditioning the conference hall and the supporting office spaces to become more sustainable by enhancing revenue generation opportunities. The conference room was also retrofitted with new tables replacing the larger and heavier wooden tables.

Recognizing that the way forward considering this pandemic requires national society to improve our virtual conferencing capability, the leadership has ordered some new computers and laptops along with teleconferencing equipment. Both the national society headquarters and the Nevis Branch has been upgraded with new color laser printers to improve the efficiency of the offices.

Remedial work to the kitchen has been completed where the bottom wooden cupboards that were infested with termites have been removed and replaced with a concrete top countertop. This should prevent another infestation of the termites as their source of food has been disrupted.

The national society continues to enhance its secondary communication capacity through the procurement of thirty (30) additional radio handsets. This was done through project funds. This will ensure that there is adequate radio communication coverage across the entire federation during any future disaster response.

### **Human Capacity Development**

Several active volunteers participated in numerous training opportunities during the reporting period. This was done to enhance capacity and efficiency of the volunteer base and the national society by extension. Some of the areas of training includes the following:

- Psychological First Aid
- Community Based Psychological Support
- Mental Health and Psycho-social Support – MHPSS
- RMS training
- Community disaster response team – CDRT

- National Intervention Team – NIT

The national society organized two simulation exercises to test the skills learnt during both the CDRT and NIT training. The first exercise simulated the main water ways flooding and resulting in casualties along the path and washing out to sea. Due to the scope of this exercise, several national responding agencies participated to test the national disaster apparatus and their ability to work together during initial phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in St. Kitts. A second exercise was recently conducted and tested both the NIT and CDRT members in St. Kitts to a collapsed building and resulting casualties.

The national society received high praises for successfully completing both these exercises because they ensured that the disaster fraternity can effectively respond to any potential disaster even under the cloud of a global pandemic.

- Regional Intervention Team – RIT (ongoing and two (2) volunteers are enrolled)
- Logistics training. This training was funded and conducted by PIRAC. This training is a segment of a partnership with PIRAC and the SKNRCS to enhance our storage capacity and our logistics capabilities.
- Community disaster planning workshop including flood hazard and simulation exercises,
- Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies (PGIE)
- Civil-Military Relations (CMR) during disasters
- Orientation session for the volunteers of the Nevis Branch held on 30/1/21.

### **Policy development**

Developing a Strategic plan was one of the main priorities of the current governing board. As such, we engaged Dr. Leighton Narraine, as a consultant to assist the

national society in achieving this goal as a component of the Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) project. Dr. Narraine conducted both primary and secondary research to formulate his initial assessment. This was then validated by the leadership of the NS through a participatory approach. Upon completion of this activity, he delivered a comprehensive and detailed strategic plan that the executive accepted and has shared with IFRC. This will be a guiding instrument for the NS for the period 2020 – 2024. The General Assembly will be invited to formally adopt this strategic plan for the NS to guide our work over the next few years.

### *Youth and volunteering strategy*

To ensure that the goals of the young people are captured and realized, the Society hosted a Youth Consultation on June 28th, 2020. This exercise was conducted with both Branches connected virtually. The lead facilitator was Kerdis Clarke – SKNRCS Volunteer. The validation process was conducted on September 6th, 2020, where young people of both Branches were collectively gathered at the headquarters in St. Kitts. Drawing from this engagement, the St. Kitts and Nevis Youth and Volunteering strategy was formulated. The report highlights youth as a critical asset to the future of the Movement, their willingness to challenge the status quo and the need to play a leading role in responding to the challenges of the Movement. Once ratified, the Youth and Volunteering strategy takes effect for a period not exceeding five (5) year period.

The themes of the Youth and Volunteering strategy are:

- Youth Participation – promote youth participation and involvement on all levels of the operations of the Movement.
- Training and Empowerment – Enhance the skillsets of young volunteers to be able to effectively execute duties.
- Leadership and Governance – Ensure that young volunteers are involved in

decision-making process and program implementation.

### *Financial Policy*

Several gaps were identified from the OCAC report in 2018 for the national society to address with urgency. Most of them required the national society to develop a financial policy. This policy would inform the procurement of goods and services by the national society and its branches. Also critically was the need to develop operational budgets by the Branches and the Headquarters; and the need to complete annual financial statements and audited report. IFRC has agreed to offer some support in developing this financial policy and the executive is currently in discussion with Ms. Thorfida Charles who is lending her expertise on behalf of IFRC.

### **Partnerships in relief**

Several local and regional partners provided financial assistance and relief supplies to the efforts of the society during our response to the Covid-19 pandemic in St. Kitts and Nevis. These partners enable us to reach more than 750 individuals and households who were impacted financially because of the myriad of consequences linked directly to the pandemic. The beneficiaries were extremely appreciative of the various interventions of the national society to alleviate their hardships during this period. The overall total contributions to our intervention funded by the various partners exceeded XCD\$250,000.

## **First Aid Training**

First aid training has the potential to significantly generate necessary income for the national society and the branches. As such, the executive agreed to revamp the program and have it managed through a centralized system led by the Vice President of Nevis, who is also the Health and First Manager for the society. For the first quarter of 2021, under this new approach, the society would have completed first aid training to several entities and would be generating just over XCD\$10,000.00. This demonstrates that with a managed system, significant revenues can be generated for the national society through the provision of this training. Some of the challenges and recommendations to improve the program as identified by the Health manager are detailed below:

### *Challenges*

1. Limited availability of instructors: although there are approximately 12 instructors within the NS only few have committed the time to conducting classes.
2. Recertification of Instructors: most of the current instructors' certifications have expired and several persons have not actually taught classes since being certified.
3. Limited skill set of Instructors: several instructors have voiced lack of confidence in conducting classes on their own (due to point 2.) To teach these programs, instructors must be comfortable with both the material and the subject matter and must also be self-motivated to follow updates and revisions. Invitations and posting were made in the instructors' group- chat and all were encouraged to co-instruct with lead instructor to gain knowledge and practice techniques during the list of classes noted above. Though several persons indicated interest and intent, only one instructor attended and participated.
4. Timeliness of issuing of certificates: In communications at time of committing to

conduct training classes especially for companies, a time frame of two weeks is given from class completion to issuing of certificates. This timing has remained consistently delayed causing discontent with requesting agencies.

5. Classes conducted outside of agreed revision protocol. All instructors have been guided to direct all request for trainings to the training email to ensure proper record keeping, monitoring and accountability.

### *RECOMMENDATIONS*

1. Need for a TOT Instructors training for at 3-4 persons at the earliest possible time.
2. Need for current instructors to be recertified.
3. NS hosting of an instructors' workshop. This workshop to be held with all current instructors with objective of updating on guidelines of training within the Covid context, allow for revision of skills, foster team building and commitment to the NS FA Program. This I am willing and have the capacity along with support of other instructor Medic colleague, to facilitate and with agreed permission after further discussion with Board would aim to have materialized by the end of June.
4. Review of structure and procurement of training supplies. Proposing that supplies be purchased jointly by the Branches and the NS. Currently supplies are purchased independently by each Branch. Based on increasing cost it would be more economical for joint procurement on a bulk basis twice annually based on public demand for training and on training budgetary goals. (Will require further discussion with treasurers and key executive members.)

### **Recommendations**

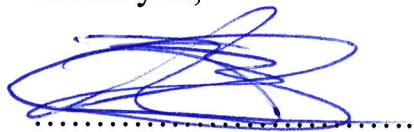
As the national society continues to evolve and transform, it is highly recommended that the executive adopts and implement the various policy documents developed over the past year. These were designed to improve the efficiency of the national society

while ensuring that they are accountable and transparent in their operations. This is critical to funding agencies and must become the norm within the national society. The structure that the current executive has introduced to manage the first aid training should be continued and enhanced where possible as this can provide significant unrestricted funding to fund the operations of the national society. Finally, it is important to continue enhancing the established partnerships with key institutions as this can only be beneficial to the future growth of the national society.

### **Acknowledgement**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who supported us (the Governing Board) over the past 2 plus years and worked along with the executive of the National Society in a constructive way to advance our initiatives while adhering to the Fundamental Principles. To the incoming executive, I wish you all the best and hope that you be bold and prepared to take the necessary steps to continue to build this National Society despite the many challenges that can arise in the future.

Thank you,



Elmo Burke, MSc.

President

SKNRCS (2019-21)